

BATH AND NORTH EAST SOMERSET COUNCIL

Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education

Annual Report September 2020 – August 2021

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All enquiries should be addressed to:

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School Improvement, PO Box 25, Riverside, Keynsham BS18 1DN.

1 Overview

1.1 Requirements as under the Education Act 1996

Much of the year continued to be disrupted by the Covid-19 lockdown arrangements. As in previous years, however, there were no applications from Headteachers in community schools to waive the requirements that collective worship shall be wholly or mainly of a broadly Christian character.

2 Religious Education

2.1 Locally Agreed Syllabus

Bath and North East Somerset SACRE shares a locally agreed syllabus with Bristol, North Somerset and the London Borough of Haringey. Since its adoption in 2016, SACRE has added a wealth of materials to its website to support schools in the provision of high quality RE. The programmes of study, together with all the supporting guidance, can be found at awarenessmysteryvalue.org. A link to the site is also published on the Bath & North East Somerset SACRE website: banes-sacre.com.

SACRE continued to publish support for online RE learning in messages to schools and academies despite ongoing Covid-19 restrictions.

2.2 Agreed Syllabus Review

During the year, consultations with schools and SACREs had taken place and work was undertaken by the representatives of the four partner SACREs sharing the Syllabus to address issues raised in those consultations. Subsequently, two meetings of the Agreed Syllabus Conference were held; first, on 10th February 2021, to consider recommendations of the cross-local authority steering group meetings regarding the Review of the Agreed Syllabus, and then, on 1st July 2021, to recommend that an updated Syllabus be formally adopted by Bath & North East Somerset Council. The updated Syllabus was due to be considered by the Council in the Autumn Term 2021, and training for teachers was planned for early in 2022.

3 Standards in Religious Education

3.1 Local Authority Concerns

SACRE has not been informed by the Local Authority of any concerns about standards of religious education in primary, secondary and special schools.

3.2 Reports and Monitoring: Ofsted and SIAMS

SACRE accesses Ofsted reports on local schools throughout the year. During 2020-21, only one school received an inspection: Clutton Primary School, and this was a short inspection. There was no mention of RE, collective worship or spiritual, moral, social and cultural development in the report, though it was noted that "Pupils particularly enjoy celebrating good attendance in assembly".

In addition to Ofsted inspections, all Church of England schools are inspected as a designated church school through the Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS). Church schools are inspected every three years if the school's previous judgment was Ineffective

(previously Inadequate) or Requiring Improvement (previously Satisfactory), and every five years if previously judged to be Excellent (previously Good or Outstanding). Since March 2020, no Statutory Inspection for Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) inspections have taken place, resulting in 15 B&NES church schools not being inspected. The inspections are due to restart from October 2021 with an expectation that the 'catch up' will take place in a chronological order. Those schools due for a SIAMS inspection this academic year, have already been notified although the exact date or term is not known. Currently, only one church school in B&NES is requiring improvement (RI) from its last inspection. The remaining 33 church schools were last judged to be Good or Outstanding / Excellent apart from two new schools that have not been inspected yet.

3.3 Schools' Self-evaluation of Religious Education

In order for SACRE to gain information about RE and collective worship in Bath & North East Somerset schools, SACRE had been sending a short survey to a proportion of schools on a rotational basis each year. It was agreed that, during the current strains on schools, the survey would be suspended for the time being in order to reduce the burden on teachers. Nevertheless, the Associate Adviser was able to complete one survey with a secondary school that he visited. At this school it was noted that standards of attainment and students' learning and progress were on the whole just above average in relation to the expectations of the Locally Agreed Syllabus. Sufficient time was being provided for RE at Key Stage 3 and there was an option group of around 26 students taking GCSE Religious Studies at Key Stage 4, but other students in Years 10 and 11 had just one 50 minute lesson of 'Philosophy and Belief' per fortnight. An 'Ethics' course was being developed for this part of the curriculum, together with a 'World Religions' unit to attempt to ensure coverage of the statutory 'RE' element. Senior managers were considering the proposal.

3.4 Analysis of school websites

3.4.1 In order to compensate for the lack of information coming from self-evaluation surveys, SACRE decided to increase the annual number of school website reviews it was conducting. In 2020-21 SACRE members reviewed a total of 29 websites. A simple 'traffic-light' system is being used to indicate whether each website contains information about the legal requirements for RE and collective worship, and to credit them where further information had been uploaded regarding such aspects of programmes of study and contributions to pupils' understanding of British Values and to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

3.4.2 Results of SACRE members' analysis were very mixed, though positive overall. RE was mentioned on most websites, but not in six of the 29 cases. There was no mention of a policy for RE, including the right to withdraw, on eleven of the sites, and no evidence was provided of planning for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and/or British Values on six. Twelve websites had only partial information on such planning. This is in line with the previous year's findings and thus represents no improvement on the picture overall.

- 3.4.3 SACRE members were also asked to rate how easy the school websites were to navigate, and find the information they were looking for. Of the 29, 18 were rated green for good, ten were rated amber and two were rated red for poor.
- 3.4.4 In order to address the issues raised in the review, SACRE's Associate Adviser wrote to all schools with a list of items of good practice regarding school websites and RE and collective worship. The letter also indicated some of the disappointing features of the SACRE findings. In any event, SACRE will continue to monitor school websites and provide some feedback for schools.
- 3.5 Secondary schools' public examination results
 - 3.5.1 Again this year, schools were not required to share their KS4 and 5 data, so no analysis of results was possible. All the same, *SACRE sends its congratulations to the staff and students for all their efforts in another exceptionally challenging year.*

4 Methods of teaching, material and training

- 4.1 Teaching materials

The Agreed Syllabus website awarenessmysteryvalue.org contains a wealth of resources for teachers as well as the statutory programmes of study. During the year updates and amendments were made to the existing materials and Syllabus review meetings with our partner SACRE advisers were held.

SACRE continues to maintain a collection of artefacts for all of the major religions at Saltford Primary School, and a subscription was taken out for the National Association for Teachers of Religious Education (NATRE) which includes regular mailings from RE Today. The termly RE Today magazine and curriculum booklets are added to the Saltford School collection. A member of staff there receives a small stipend for managing the resources and arranging free loans to Bath & North East Somerset schools.
- 4.2 Teacher training and projects

SACRE won a Westhill/NASACRE Award for 2020-21 for a project that has involved teachers from across the Agreed Syllabus partnership area in the development of mini-schemes of learning around the theme of 'RE-Live'. The project has made use of examples from the contemporary world to improve pupils' knowledge and understanding of the diversity of religion and belief and a deeper understanding of people from different groups. Five of the planned eight mini-schemes have been uploaded to the Agreed Syllabus website, with the remaining three units to be added towards the end of 2021.

SACRE also took part in a Religious Education Council of England and Wales (REC) project to develop the role of SACRE in the form of a 'Local Area Network (LAN) for Religion and Worldviews' as recommended by the 2018 Commission on RE. The Associate Adviser completed a report for this project which was reviewed and approved by SACRE at the July meeting.
- 4.3 SACRE website: banes-sacre.com.

The SACRE website was maintained and updated during the year. A co-opted member of SACRE receives a small stipend for managing the site

and ensuring it is kept up-to-date. As well as information about SACRE, the site contains ideas for RE specifically for Bath and North-East Somerset schools, including lists of resources available to borrow and reports on the use of local visits and visitors to support agreed syllabus RE.

4.4 Complaints about Religious Education

The Local Authority/SACRE received no formal complaints concerning RE.

5 Collective worship

5.1 Monitoring

As with religious education (see section 3.2), SACRE decided to suspend its survey of a selection of schools in favour of a larger review of school websites.

5.2 Analysis of school websites

5.2.1 As for religious education, SACRE analysed the websites of 29 schools using a simple 'traffic-light' system. It was found that 11 schools included a substantial reference to collective worship on their websites, which was a improvement on the situation two years ago, when only a few sites mentioned it. Eight of the sites included a partial mention. Despite the legal requirement to let parents know of the right to withdraw children from the daily act, however, 13 of the sites failed to mention it. As for RE, SACRE has provided feedback for schools about its findings on collective worship on school websites.

5.2.2 Training

No training on collective worship was organised by SACRE during the year but information from other local providers, such as the Diocese of Bath & Wells was circulated to schools.

5.3 Complaints and determinations

5.3.1 The Local Authority/SACRE received no formal complaints, and there were no requests from schools to vary the legal requirement for collective worship.

6 Links with other agencies

6.1 National

SACRE's Associate Adviser attended two Religious Education Council of England and Wales (REC) general meetings, in November 2020 and May 2021 (both via Zoom). SACRE has engaged in an REC/NASACRE-sponsored project looking at the implications of the Commission on Religious Education (CoRE) recommendations for the future of RE and SACREs (see 4.2 above).

Two SACRE members and the Associate Adviser attended the AGM of the National Association of Standing Advisory Councils on RE (NASACRE) and they made a report on the conference to SACRE.

6.2 Regional

Six SACRE members attended the online South-West Conference for SACREs, which featured a keynote address by Farid Panjwani (University of London) speaking from Karachi, on 'Decolonising the Curriculum'. A full report on the conference was shared with SACRE members and implications for future SACRE work and Agreed Syllabus review noted.

Bath & North East Somerset SACRE continued to take part in the regional Learn Teach Lead RE (LTLRE) project, with funding from Diocesan and other charities, aiming to provide training in religious education, especially through the building of communities of RE teachers across the region. The annual regional conference that had been postponed due to the pandemic last year, ran in June 2021. It featured keynote addresses by Richard Kueh (Ofsted, Subject Lead for RE) and Ruth Flanagan (Primary ITE Tutor, Exeter University).

6.3 Local

Contact is maintained and found helpful with North Somerset, Haringey and Bristol SACREs, the Secondary Heads of Religious Education and the Bath Interfaith Group (IFG). Bath IFG members are represented on SACRE (Committee A), and local interfaith events are publicised to SACRE members.

Bath IFG continued to be active during Covid-19 restrictions. During the year, the Group's patron, the Mayor of Bath, Councillor Manda Rigby, led an online event called 'Combatting Loneliness, Bath the Friendly City', with contributions from six different faith communities; there was a socially-distanced Keynsham to Bath Abbey Pilgrimage; and there was a 'Festivals of Winter and Light' event with poems, prayer, readings, and music from several faith traditions. Another successful event, with 141 attending on-screen, was the commemoration of Holocaust Memorial Day, organised in collaboration with Bath and North East Somerset Council Equalities Team. This included an address from Yoav Ben-Shlomo, whose father had successfully escaped Nazi persecution in Poland, and included evocative Jewish music. The Group also collaborated in events with Bath Spa Students Union (during Inter Faith Week) and the Ammerdown Retreat Centre, as well as supporting the Mayor of Bath's annual Multifaith Event. But the biggest event of the year was an online celebration of 30 years of Bath IFG: 'Faiths Together in Bath: Past, Present and Future'. This included a keynote address by Revd Dr Marcus Braybrooke as well as contributions from many faith and charitable organisations. It was attended by several local dignitaries.

7 SACRE arrangements

7.1 Chair and membership

SACRE's Chair is Dr Jane O'Hara (Group A – Bahá'i Community) and there are two Vice-Chairs, David Williams (Group B – Church of England) and Narada Das (Group A – Hindu Community – ISKCON). Narada Das stood down in October 2020 and Kevin Burnett was elected in his place. David Williams was re-elected for a further three year term as Vice-Chair from February 2021.

SACRE is fortunate in having participation from a diverse representation from local faith communities, and these contacts are especially useful as a resource to RE teachers locally.

SACRE recorded its grateful thanks to three members who left its service this year, Narada Das (Hindu - ISKCON), Gagan Deep Singh (Sikh) and Miranda Young (CofE).

During the year a new representative for Hindu community, Ashish Rajhansha, and a new representative for the Humanist community, Matt

Evans, were appointed as new members. In addition, with the appointment of a new Hindu representative and the election of Dr Yuktेशwar Kumar as a councillor, DR Kumar moved from Group A to Group D.

7.2 Professional and administrative support

SACRE was supported by Dave Francis, the Associate Adviser for Religious Education and Clerk to SACRE.

7.3 Finance report

See Financial Statement below.

SACRE Financial Statement 1st April 2019 to 31st March 2020

**Allocation (includes additional £5,640 for Agreed Syllabus Review and £2,000 for 'RE-Live' Westhill project [1st tranche]
An overspend of £16 brought forward from 19-20 £ 16,130.10**

Expenditure

Agreed Syllabus Review & Development	2,340.00
Resource Centre including RE Today subscription	104.00
Members' training, expenses, fees & NASACRE subscription	235.00
Monitoring of RE and collective worship and production of newsletters and annual report	1,080.00
SACRE and Agreed Syllabus websites hosting and management	410.10
First stage of 'Education into Diversity: RE-Live' Westhill / NASACRE Project	2,000.00
Professional fees	5,410.00
TOTAL	11,579.10

Allocation + funds brought forward	16,130.10
Total Spend	(11,579.10)
To be brought forward 2020-21	4,551.00